

punished as a sturdy beggar, whether
actually begging
or not.^{14*}

The protest against indiscriminate
almsgiving, as the
parade of a spurious religion, which
sacrificed character
to a formal piety, was older than the
Reformation, but
it had been given a new emphasis by the
reformers.
Luther had denounced the demands
of beggars as
blackmail, and the Swiss reformers had
stamped out
the remnants of monastic charity, as a bribe
ministered
by Popery to dissoluteness and
demoralization. " I
conclude that all the large givings of the
papists/¹
preached an English divine in the reign of
Elizabeth,
<^f of which at this day many make so
great brags,
because they be not done in a reverent
regard of the
commandment of the Lord, in love, and of
an inward
being touched with the calamities of the
needy, but
for to be well reported of before men
whilst they are
alive, and to be prayed for after they are
dead " . . .
""are indeed no alms, but pharisaical
trumpets." "" The
rise of a commercial civilization, the
reaction against
the authoritarian social policy of the
Tudors, and
the progress of Puritanism among the
middle classes,
all combined in the next half-century to
sharpen the
edge of that doctrine. Nurtured in a
tradition which
made the discipline of character by
industry and self-
denial the centre of its ethical scheme,

the Puritan
moralist was undisturbed by any doubts as
to whether
even the seed of the righteous might not
sometimes
be constrained to beg its bread, and met the
taunt that
the repudiation of good works was the
cloke for a
conscienceless egoism with the retort
that the easy-
going open-handedness of the
sentimentalist was not
less selfish in its motives and was more
corrupting to its
objects. "As for idle beggars/¹ wrote
Steele, " happy
for them if fewer people spent their foolish
pity upon
their bodies, and if more shewed some wise
compassion
upon their souls/'¹³¹ That the greatest
of evils is
idleness, that the poor are the victims, not
of circum-